

VIII

Knowledge and truth

HATELOVING (*L'HAINAMORATION*).

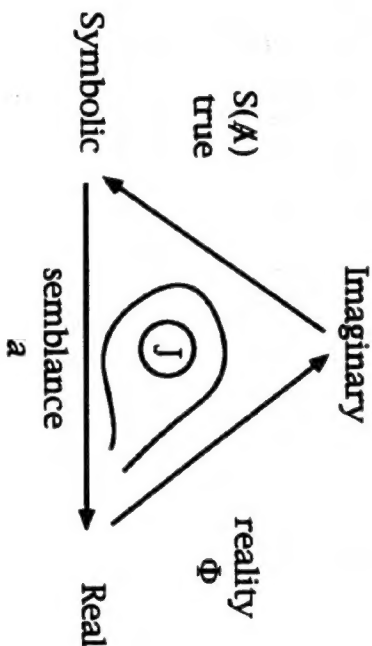
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT TRUTH.

CONTINGENCY OF THE PHALLIC FUNCTION.

FREUD'S CHARITY.

GETTING OFF ON KNOWLEDGE.

THE UNCONSCIOUS AND WOMAN.



I would really like it if, from time to time, I had a response, even a protest.

I left rather worried the last time, to say the least. It seemed altogether bearable to me, nevertheless, when I reread what I had said – that's my way of saying that it was very good. But I wouldn't be displeased if someone could attest to having understood something. It would be enough for a hand to go up for me to give that hand the floor, so to speak.

I see that no one is putting a hand up, and thus I must go on.

What I will willingly write for you today as "*hainamoration*" is the depth (*relief*) psychoanalysis was able to introduce in order to situate the zone of

¹ *Hainamoration* is composed of the noun *haine* ("hate") and the adjective *énamonné* ("enamored"), "Depth" probably isn't the best translation for *relief* three words further on; other possible translations include "profile," "terrain," "ground," "outline," and so on.

its experience. It was evidence of good will on its part. If only it had been able to call it by some other name than the bastardized one of "ambivalence," perhaps it would have succeeded better in shaking up the historical setting in which it inserted itself. But perhaps that was modesty on its part.

I mentioned last time that it's no accident Freud arms himself with Empedocles' statement that God must be the most ignorant of all beings, since he does not know hatred. The question of love is thus linked to that of knowledge. I added that Christians transformed God's non-hatred into a mark of love. It is here that analysis reminds us that one knows nothing of love without hate. Well, if the knowledge (*connaissance*) that has been fomented over the course of the centuries disappoints us, and if today we must overhaul the function of knowledge, it is perhaps because hatred has never been put in its proper place.

True, that doesn't seem to be the most desirable thing to mention. That's why I ended last time with the sentence, "One could say that the more a man believes a woman confuses him with God, in other words, what she enjoys," recall the schema I presented last time, "the less he hates," and simultaneously, "the less he is," in other words, in this business, "the less he loves."² I wasn't too happy about having ended on that note, which is nevertheless a truth. That is why today I will examine once more in what respect the true and the real apparently get confused.³

"The true aims at the real" – that statement is the fruit of a long reduction of pretensions to truth. Wherever truth presents itself, asserts itself as if it were an ideal that could be based on speech,⁴ it is not so easily attained. If analysis rests on a presumption, it is that knowledge about truth can be constituted on the basis of its experience.

In the little writing (*gramme*) I gave you of analytic discourse, *a* is written in the upper left-hand corner, and is supported by S_2 ; in other words, by knowledge insofar as it is in the place of truth. It is from that point that it⁵ interrogates $\$$, which must lead to the production of S_1 , that is, of the signifier by which can be resolved what? Its relation to truth.

$$\frac{a}{S_2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S_1}$$

Schema of Analytic Discourse

Truth, let us say, to go right to the quick, is originally $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$, a term about which Heidegger speculated extensively. *Emet*, the Hebrew term, is,

² Lacan has slightly changed his formulation since the last time.

³ The French here, *se confond*, could also be translated as "overlap."

⁴ Or "an ideal of which speech could be the medium (or prop)."

⁵ "It" here seems to refer to *a*, but could grammatically refer to S_2 or knowledge.

like every term for truth, of juridical origin. Even in our times, a witness is asked to tell the truth, nothing but the truth, and, what's more, the whole truth, if he can – but how, alas, could he? We demand of him the whole truth about what he knows. But, in fact, what is sought – especially in legal testimony – is that on the basis of which one can judge his jouissance.⁶ The goal is that jouissance be avowed, precisely insofar as it may be unavowable. The truth sought is the one that is unavowable with respect to the law that regulates jouissance.

It is also in that sense that, in Kant's terms, the problem is raised of what a free man should do when one proposes to him all the jouissances if he denounces the enemy who the tyrant fears is disputing his jouissance. From the imperative that nothing pathetic⁷ should dictate testimony, must we deduce that a free man ought to tell the tyrant the truth, even if that means delivering the enemy or rival into the tyrant's hands by his truthfulness? The reservations sparked in all of us by Kant's answer, which is affirmative, stem from the fact that the whole truth is what cannot be told. It is what can only be told on the condition that one doesn't push it to the edge, that one only half-tells (*mi-dire*) it.

Yet another thing restrains (*ligote*) us regarding the status of truth: the fact that jouissance is a limit. This is related to the very structure that was evoked by my "quadrípodes" at the time at which I constructed them for you – jouissance is questioned (*s'interpelle*), evoked, tracked, and elaborated only on the basis of a semblance.

Love itself, as I stressed last time, is addressed to the semblance. And if it is true that the Other is only reached if it attaches itself (*qu'à s'accrocher*), as I said last time, to *a*, the cause of desire, then love is also addressed to the semblance of being. That there-being⁸ is not nothing. It is attributed to (*supposé à*)⁹ that object that is *a*.

Shouldn't we find anew here the trace that, insofar as such, it (cor)responds to some imaginary? I have expressly designated that imaginary as *I* (*I*), isolated here from the term "imaginary." It is only on the basis of the clothing of the self-image that envelops the object cause of desire that the object relationship¹⁰ is most often sustained – that is the very articulation of analysis.

⁶ *Ce qu'il en est de sa jouissance* literally means "how things stand with his jouissance," or "the status or state of his jouissance."

⁷ "Pathetic" in the Kantian sense of an emotional attachment to a person or thing.

⁸ The French here, *cet être-là*, literally "that being over there" or "the being just mentioned," also plays off of the French term for Dasein: *être-là*, "being-there."

⁹ *Qu'à s'accrocher* in the last sentence could also be rendered as "if one attaches oneself."

¹⁰ *Supposé à* would more literally be translated as "assumed in" or "presupposed in."

¹¹ *Rapport objectif* is not the same as the usual term for object relations in French, *relation d'objet*.

The affinity of *a* to its envelope is one of the major conjunctions put forward by psychoanalysis. To me it essentially introduces a point about which we must be suspicious.

This is where the real distinguishes itself. The real can only be inscribed on the basis of an impasse of formalization. That is why I thought I could provide a model of it using mathematical formalization, inasmuch as it is the most advanced elaboration we have by which to produce significance.

The mathematical formalization of significance runs counter to meaning – I almost said "*à contre-sens*."¹¹ In our times, philosophers of mathematics say "it means nothing" concerning mathematics, even when they are mathematicians themselves, like Russell.

And yet, compared to a philosophy that culminates in Hegel's discourse – a plenitude of contrasts dialectized in the idea of an historical progression, which, it must be said, nothing substantiates for us – can't the formalization of mathematical logic, which is based only on writing (*l'écriture*), serve us in the analytic process, in that what invisibly holds (*retient*) bodies is designated therein?

If I were allowed to give an image for this, I would easily take that which, in nature, seems to most closely approximate the reduction to the dimensions of the surface writing (*l'écriture*) requires, at which Spinoza himself marveled – the textual work that comes out of the spider's belly, its web. It is a truly miraculous function to see, on the very surface emerging from an opaque point of this strange being, the trace of these writings taking form, in which one can grasp the limits, impasses, and dead ends that show the real acceding to the symbolic.

That is why I do not believe that it was in vain that I eventually came up with the inscriptions (*l'écriture*) *a*, the $\$$ of the signifier, *A*, and Φ . Their very writing constitutes a medium (*support*) that goes beyond speech, without going beyond language's actual effects. Its value lies in centering the symbolic, on the condition of knowing how to use it, for what? To retain¹² a congruous truth – not the truth that claims to be whole, but that of the half-telling (*mi-dire*), the truth that is borne out by guarding against going as far as avowal, which would be the worst, the truth that becomes guarded starting right with (*dès*) the cause of desire.

2

Analysis presumes that desire is inscribed on the basis of a corporal contingency.

¹¹ *Contre-sens* literally means "counter meaning," "counter direction," "against the tide or current," etc.; figuratively, it means "contradiction."

¹² *Retenir* can mean "to hold," "reserve," "retain," "keep," "carry," "accept," and so on, as well as to "hold back," "check," "stop," "keep back," etc.

Let me remind you what I base this term "contingency" on. The phallus – as analysis takes it up as the pivotal or extreme point of what is enunciated as the cause of desire – analytic experience stops not writing it. It is in this "stops not being written" (*cesse de ne pas s'écrire*)¹³ that resides the apex of what I have called contingency.

Analytic experience encounters its terminus (*terme*) here, for the only thing it can produce, according to my writing (*grainne*), is S_1 . I think you still remember the clamor I managed to stir up last time by designating this signifier, S_1 , as the signifier of even the most idiotic jouissance – in the two senses of the term, the idiot's jouissance, which certainly functions as a reference here, and also the oddest jouissance.¹⁴

The necessary is introduced to us by the "doesn't stop" (*ne cesse pas*). The "doesn't stop" of the necessary is the "doesn't stop being written" (*ne cesse pas de s'écrire*). Analysis of the reference to the phallus apparently leads us to this necessity.

The "doesn't stop not being written," on the contrary, is the impossible, as I define it on the basis of the fact that it cannot in any case be written, and it is with this that I characterize the sexual relationship – the sexual relationship doesn't stop not being written.

Because of this, the apparent necessity of the phallic function turns out to be mere contingency. It is as a mode of the contingent that the phallic function stops not being written. What submits the sexual relationship to being, for speaking beings, but the regime of the encounter is tantamount to contingency. It is only as contingency that, thanks to psychoanalysis, the phallus, reserved in ancient times to the Mysteries, has stopped not being written. Nothing more. It has not entered into the "doesn't stop," that is, into the field on which depend necessity, on the one hand, and impossibility.¹⁵

The true thus attests here that by making us beware the imaginary, as it does, it has a lot to do with "a-natomy."

It is, in the final analysis, from a depreciatory perspective that I contribute the three terms I write as a , $S(\mathcal{A})$, and Φ . They are written on the triangle constituted by the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real.¹⁶

To the right is the scant reality (*peu-de-réalité*)¹⁷ on which the pleasure

¹³ *S'écrire* could less idiomatically be translated as "to write itself" or "writing itself."

¹⁴ The Greek root of "idiot," *idiōtēs*, means "particular" or "peculiar."

¹⁵ I have left out two words before "impossibility," *plus haut*, which are quite vague and could be rendered as "higher up" or "above that" (as if Lacan were referring to a diagram), or as "before that" or "prior to that."

¹⁶ See the triangle on the first page of this chapter.

¹⁷ Cf. André Breton's use of this term in "Discours sur le peu de réalité" in his *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Pleiades, 1993), vol. 2.

principle is based, which is such that everything we are allowed to approach by way of reality remains rooted in fantasy.

On the other side, what is $S(\mathcal{A})$ but the impossibility of telling the whole truth (*tout le vrai*), about which I spoke earlier?

Lastly, the symbolic, directing itself toward the real, shows us the true nature of object a . If I qualified it earlier as a semblance of being, it is because it seems to give us the basis (*support*) of being. In everything elaborated on being and even on essence, in Aristotle's work for example, we can see, if we read it on the basis of analytic experience, that object a is what is at stake. Contemplation, for example, Aristotelian contemplation, is based on the gaze, as I defined it in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, as one of the four media (*supports*) that constitute the cause of desire.

With such a "graphization" – not to say "graph," because that term has a precise meaning in mathematical logic – we see the correspondences that make the real an open [set] between semblance, a result of the symbolic, and reality as it is based on the concreteness of human life: on what leads men, on what makes them always run headlong down the same pathways, and on what is such that the yet-to-be-born (*encore-à-naître*) will never yield anything but *l'encorné*.¹⁸

On the other side we have a . Being on the right path, overall, it would have us take it for being, in the name of the following – that it is apparently something. But it only dissolves (*se résout*), in the final analysis, owing to its failure, unable, as it is, to sustain itself in approaching the real.

The true, then, of course, is that. Except that it is never reached except by twisted pathways. To appeal to the true, as we are often led to do, is simply to recall that one must not make the mistake of believing that we are already at the level of semblance (*dans le semblant*). Before the semblance, on which, in effect, everything is based and springs back in fantasy, a strict distinction must be made between the imaginary and the real. It must not be thought that we ourselves in any way serve as a basis for the semblance. We are not even semblance. We are, on occasion, that which can occupy that place, and allow what to reign there? Object a .

Indeed, the analyst, of all [those whose] orders of discourse are sustained currently (*actuellement*)¹⁹ – and that word is not nothing, provided we give "action" its full Aristotelian meaning – is the one who, by putting object a in the place of semblance, is in the best position to do what should rightfully (*juste*) be done, namely, to investigate the status of truth as knowledge.

¹⁸ *L'encorné* is "someone with horns," a reference to someone who has been cheated on, a cuckold. *L'encore-né* ("the reborn") is a homonym.

¹⁹ There is a problem of grammatical structure in this sentence, as Lacan compares the analyst as a person, instead of analytic discourse, to other orders of discourse.

3

What is knowledge? It is strange that, prior to Descartes, the question of knowledge had never been raised. Analysis had to come onto the scene before this question was raised afresh.

Analysis came to announce to us that there is knowledge that is not known, knowledge that is based on the signifier as such. A dream does not introduce us into any kind of unfathomable experience or mystery – it is read in what is said about it, and one can go further by taking up the equivocations therein in the most anagrammatic sense of the word ["equivocations"]. It is regarding that aspect of language that Saussure raised the question whether the strange punctuation marks he found in the saturnine verses were intentional or not.²⁰ That is where Saussure was awaiting Freud. And it is where the question of knowledge is raised afresh.

If you will excuse me for borrowing from an entirely different register, that of the virtues inaugurated by the Christian religion, there is here a sort of belated effect, an offshoot of charity. Wasn't it charitable of Freud to have allowed the misery of speaking beings to say to itself that there is – since there is the unconscious – something transcendent, truly transcendent, which is but what the species inhabits, namely, language? Wasn't there, yes, charity in the fact of announcing the news that his everyday life has, in language, a more reasonable basis than it seemed before, and that there is already some wisdom – unattainable object of a vain pursuit – there? Do we need this whole detour to raise the question of knowledge in the form, "What is it that knows?" Do we realize that it is the Other? – such as I posited it at the outset, as a locus in which the signifier is posited, and without which nothing indicates to us that there is a dimension of truth anywhere, a *dis-mension*, the residence of what is said, of this said (*dit*) whose knowledge posits the Other as locus. The status of knowledge implies as such that there already is knowledge, that it is in the Other, and that it is to be acquired (*à prendre*). That is why it is related to learning (*l'apprendre*).

The subject results from the fact that this knowledge must be learned, and even have a price put on it – in other words, it is its cost that values it, not as exchange but as use. Knowledge is worth just as much as it costs (*coûte*), a pretty penny (*beau-couit*),²¹ in that it takes elbow grease²² and that it's difficult. Difficult to what? Less to acquire it than to enjoy it (*d'en jouir*). In the enjoying, the conquest of this knowledge is renewed every time it

is exercised, the power it yields always being directed toward its jouissance.

It is strange that it has never been brought out clearly that the meaning of knowledge resides altogether in the fact that the difficulty of its exercise is the very thing that increases the difficulty of its acquisition. That is because, with every exercise of this acquisition, we find anew that there's no point asking which of these repetitions was the first to have been learned.

Of course there are things that run and that certainly seem to work like little machines – they are called computers. I am willing to accept the notion that a computer thinks. But that it knows, who would say such a thing? For the foundation of knowledge is that the jouissance of its exercise is the same as that of its acquisition.

Here we encounter in a sure manner, surer than in Marx's own work, the true nature of use value, since in Marx's work use value serves only as an ideal point in relation to exchange value, to which everything is reduced.

Let us talk about this learned (*appris*) that is not based on exchange. With Marx's knowledge of politics – which is not nothing – one cannot do "*commence*,"²³ if you will allow me. No more than one can, with Freud's knowledge, *défraud*.

One has but to look to see that, wherever one does not come by such knowledge (*ces savoirs*) by pounding it into one's head by tough experience, it falls flat. It can neither be imported nor exported. There is no information that stands up unless it is shaped for use (*formé à l'usage*).

Thus is deduced the fact that knowledge is in the Other and owes nothing to being except that the latter has borne (*véhiculé*) the letter thereof. From whence it results that being can kill where the letter reproduces, but never reproduces the same, never the same being of knowledge.

I think you must have an inking now of the function I grant the letter in relation to knowledge. I beg you not to too quickly associate this function with so-called messages, for it makes the letter analogous to a germ cell, which, in the realm of molecular physiology, must be strictly separated from the bodies with respect to which it transmits (*véhicule*) life and death together.

Marx and Lenin, Freud and Lacan are not coupled in being. It is via the letter they found in the Other that, as beings of knowledge, they proceed two by two, in a supposed Other. What is new about their knowledge is that it doesn't presume the Other knows anything about it – certainly not the being who constituted the letter there²⁴ – for it is clearly on the basis of the

²⁰ A combination of commerce and Marx.

²¹ The French here, *l'ère qui y a fait lettre*, could also be translated as "the being who played the part of (or became) the letter there." The words I have translated as "it doesn't presume the Other knows anything about it," *il n'est pas supposé que l'Autre en sache rien*, could also be translated as "it doesn't presume the Other knows nothing about it."

²² The French here, *qu'il faille y mettre de sa peau*, could also be translated as "one must pay with one's hide (or skin)" or "one must pay in blood."

Other (*de l'Aure*)²⁵ that he constituted the letter at his own expense, at the price of his being, which, by God, is not nothing at all for each of us, but not a whole lot either, to tell the truth.

I'm going to tell you a little secret about those beings from which the letter is wrought (*d'où se fait la lettre*). Despite everything people have said, for example, about Lenin, I don't think either hate or love, *hainamoration*, has ever really killed (*étouffé*) anyone. Don't tell me stories about Mrs. Freud! On that score, I have Jung's testimony. He told the truth. Indeed, that was his flaw – he told nothing but that.

Those who still manage to make those kinds of rejections of being are really the ones who partake of scorn (*mépris*). I will make you write it this time, since today I'm having fun, *mépris*.²⁶ That makes *uniprix*. We live in the age of supermarkets, so one must know what one is capable of producing, even by way of being.

The hitch is that the Other, the locus, knows nothing. One can no longer hate God if he himself knows nothing – in particular, of what is going on. When one could hate him, one could believe he loved us, since he didn't hate us in return. This is not apparent, despite the fact that, in certain cases, people went at it full speed ahead.

Lastly, as I come to the end of these discourses that I have the strength to pursue before you, I would like to tell you an idea that came to me, about which I have reflected just a little bit. The misfortune of Christ is explained to us by the idea of saving men. I find, rather, that the idea was to save God by giving a little presence and actuality back to that hatred of God regarding which we are, and for good reason, rather indecisive (*mou*).

That is why I say that the imputation of the unconscious is an incredible act of charity. The subjects know, they know. But all the same, they don't know everything. At the level of this not-everything (*pas-tout*), only the Other doesn't know. It is the Other who constitutes the not-everything, precisely in that the Other is the part of the not-at-all-knowledgeable (*pas-savant-du-tout*)²⁷ in the not-everything.

Thus, it may momentarily be convenient to make the Other responsible for this, to which analysis leads in the most avowed manner, though no one realizes it: if libido is only masculine, it is only from where the dear woman

²⁵ Or "from the Other." It is not clear to me what *il* here (rendered by "he") refers to.

²⁶ *Prix* itself means "price," and thus *mépris* literally means "mispriced." *Uniprix* (in the next sentence) is the name of a French supermarket and literally means "one price" or "united price." "Supermarkets" (in the sentence after that) is in English in the original.

²⁷ The French here could also be translated as "not-knowledgeable-of-the-whole."

is whole, in other words, from the place from which man sees her, that the dear woman can have an unconscious.

And what does it help her do?²⁸ It helps her, as everyone knows, make the speaking being, who is reduced here to man, speak, in other words – I don't know if you have noticed this in analytic theory – it helps her exist only as mother. She has unconscious effects, but her unconscious – at the limit point at which she is not responsible for everyone's unconscious, in other words, at the point at which the Other she deals with, the Other with a capital O, works in such a way that she knows nothing, because the Other knows even less, given how difficult it is to even maintain its existence – this unconscious, what can we say of it, if not to sustain with Freud that it doesn't leave her sitting pretty?

The last time, I played (*joué*), as I allow myself to do, on the equivocation, a bit farfetched, between *il* *hait* (he hates) and *il* *est* (he is). I enjoy (*jouis*) that equivocation only insofar as I ask whether it is worthy of a pair of scissors. That is precisely what is at stake in castration.

That being as such may provoke hatred cannot be ruled out. Certainly, Aristotle's whole concern was, on the contrary, to conceive of being as that by which beings with less being participate in the highest of beings. And Saint Thomas succeeded in reintroducing that into the Christian tradition – which is not surprising given that, having spread among the Gentiles, the Christian tradition had necessarily been thoroughly shaped thereby, the upshot being that one had but to pull the strings for it to work again. But do people realize that everything in the Jewish tradition goes against that? The dividing line (*coupure*) there does not run from the most perfect to the least perfect. The least perfect there is quite simply what it is, namely, radically imperfect, and one must but obey with the finger and the eye, if I dare express myself thus, he who bears the name Jahve, and several other names to boot. The latter chose his people and one cannot go against that.

Isn't it revealed therein that it is far better to betray him occasionally than to "be-thrate" him (*l'être-hait*)²⁹ the former being what the Jews obviously did not deprive themselves of doing. They couldn't work it out (*en sortir*) any other way.

On the subject of hatred, we're so deadened (*étouffés*) that no one realizes that a hatred, a solid hatred, is addressed to being, to the very being of someone who is not necessarily God.

We remain struck – and that is why I said that *a* is a semblance of being –

²⁸ The French, *à quoi ça lui sert*, could also be translated as "what good does it do her" or "what purpose does it serve for her."

²⁹ Lacan here combines the verbs to be and to hate, but *l'être-hait* can also be heard as *le trahit*, "to betray him."

at the level – and it is in that respect that analysis, as always, is a little bit lame – of the notion of jealous hatred, the hatred that springs forth from “jealousness,” the hatred that “springs forth” (*s’imageuilisse*)³⁰ from the gaze of the little guy observed by Saint Augustine. Augustine is there as a third party. He observes the little guy and, *pallidus*, the latter pales in observing the *conlactaneum sum* hanging on the nipple. Fortunately, this [jealousness] is the first substitute jouissance, according to Freud – the desire evoked on the basis of a metonymy that is inscribed on the basis of a presumed demand, addressed to the Other, that is, on the basis of the kernel³¹ of what I called *Ding*, in my seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, namely, the Freudian Thing, in other words, the very neighbor (*prochain*) Freud refuses to love beyond certain limits.

The child who is gazed at has it – he has the *a*. Is having the *a* the same as being it? That is the question with which I will leave you today.

March 20, 1973

Complement

Beginning of the next class: THE LINGUIST'S POSITION.

I hardly ever talk about what comes out when it is something by me, especially since I generally have to wait so long for it that my interest in it wanes. Nevertheless, it wouldn't be bad for next time if you read something I entitled “*L'Étourdi*,” that begins with the distance there is between the saying (*dire*) and the said (*dit*).

The fact that being may reside only in what is said (*Qu'il n'y ait d'être que dans le dit*) is a question I'll leave open. It is certain that nothing is said but of being (*il n'y a du dit que de l'être*), yet that does not imply the inverse. On the contrary, and this is something I have said (*mon dire*), the unconscious is only on the basis of what is said (*il n'y a de l'inconscient que du dit*). We can deal with the unconscious only on the basis of what is said, of what is said by the analysand. That is a saying (*dire*).

How to say it? That is the question. One cannot speak any old which way, and that is the problem of whoever inhabits language, namely, all of us.

³⁰ *S'imageuilisse* contains *s'image* and *jailisse* and seems to suggest a sort of springing forth from the image.

³¹ The French here could be translated in many different ways due to the ambiguity of the thrice repeated *de*: *le désir évoqué d'une métonymie qui s'inscrit d'une demande supposée, adressée à l'Autre, de ce noyau...* What I have thrice translated as “on the basis of” could be replaced by “from,” “by,” “of,” or “due to.” The third *de* could also be understood as linked to *demande*, thus suggesting the translation “a presumed demand, addressed to the Other, for the kernel...” *Noyau* (kernel) could also be translated as “nucleus” or “core.”

That is why today – regarding the gap I wanted to express one day by distinguishing what I do here from linguistics, the former being linguistics – I asked someone, who to my great appreciation was willing to grant my request, to come today to tell you how things stand currently from the linguist's position. No one is better qualified than the person I present to you, Jean-Claude Milner, a linguist.

End of the class: thank-you's.

I don't know what I can do in the quarter of an hour that remains. I will take an ethical notion as my guide. Ethics, as perhaps can be glimpsed by those who heard me speak about it formerly, is closely related to our inhabiting of language, and it is also – as a certain author whom I will mention another time has laid it out – in the realm of gestures. When one inhabits language, there are gestures one makes, greeting (*salutation*) gestures, pros-
 tration gestures on occasion, and gestures of admiration when it is a question of another vanishing point (*point de fuite*) – beauty. That implies that things go no further. One makes a gesture and then one conducts oneself like everyone else, namely, like the rest of the riffraff (*canailles*).

Nevertheless, there are gestures and then there are gestures. The first gesture that is literally dictated to me by this ethical reference must be that of thanking Jean-Claude Milner for what he has told us concerning the present state of the fault line (*faille*) that is opening up in linguistics itself. That justifies perhaps a certain number of behaviors that we perhaps owe – I'm speaking for myself – only to a certain distance we were at from this science on the rise, when it believed that it could become a science. It was truly urgent for us to obtain the information we have just received. Indeed, it is very hard not to realize that, regarding analytic technique, if the subject sitting across from us doesn't say anything, it is a difficulty concerning which the least one can say is that it is altogether unusual (*spéciale*).

What I put forward, by writing *lalangue* [language] as one word, is that by which I distinguish myself from structuralism, insofar as the latter would like to integrate language into semiology – and that seems to me one of the numerous lights Jean-Claude Milner shed on things. As is indicated by the little book that I had you read entitled *The Title of the Letter*, what is at stake in everything I have put forward is the sign's subordination with respect to the signifier.

I must also take the time to render homage to Recanatì who, in his intervention, certainly proved to me that I had been heard (*entendu*).³² This can be seen in all the cutting-edge questions he raised – they are, in a sense, the

³² *Entendu* also means “understood.”

questions for which I have the rest of the year to provide you with what I now have by way of a response. The fact that he ended on the question of Kierkegaard and Regine is absolutely exemplary. As I had hitherto made but a brief allusion to them, it was certainly his own contribution. One cannot better illustrate the way in which the ground-breaking I am engaging in before you resonates, than when someone grasps what is at stake. The questions he asked me will certainly be helpful in what I will say to you in what follows. I will ask him for the written text of his talk so that I can refer to it when I am about to respond.

He also referred to Berkeley, and it is insofar as there wasn't the slightest allusion to Berkeley in what I have enunciated before you that I am still more grateful to him. To tell you the whole story, I even took the trouble quite recently to find a first edition – you see I'm a bibliophile, but it's only books I want to read that I try to find first editions of – and thus, last Sunday, I again came across the *Minute Philosopher*, also known as *Alciphron*. It is clear that if Berkeley hadn't been among my earliest readings, many things, including my free-wheeling use of linguistic references, probably wouldn't have been possible.

I would nevertheless like to say something concerning the schema Recanati had to erase earlier.³³ To be hysterical or not – that is truly the question. Is there One or not? In other words, this not-whole (*pas-toute*), in classical logic, seems to imply the existence of the One that constitutes (*fait*) an exception. Henceforth, it would be there that we would see the emergence in an abyss – and you will see why I qualify it thusly – of that existence, that at-least-one existence that, with regard to the function Φx , is inscribed in order to speak it (*s'inscri pour la dire*).³⁴ For the property of what is said is being, as I said earlier. But the property of the act of saying is to exist in relation to any statement (*dit*) whatsoever.³⁵

The question then arises whether, given a not-whole, an objection to the universal, something can result that would be enunciated as a particular that contradicts the universal – you can see that I am remaining here at the level of Aristotelian logic.³⁶

In that logic, on the basis of the fact that one can write “not-every (*pas-tout*) x is inscribed in Φx ,” one deduces by way of implication that there is

³³ Recanati apparently spoke at Lacan's seminar four months earlier, and thus it seems there may be an error in the French text here. Recanati had also mentioned Berkeley when he spoke at Lacan's Seminar the year before (June 14, 1972).

³⁴ *La* here could refer either to “existence” or “function,” but “function” seems most likely.

³⁵ The French here reads *exister*, but the context seems to require *ex-sister*.

³⁶ As Aristotelian logic is usually understood, $\sim \forall x \Phi x$ (that is, not all x's such that Φx) would normally imply $\exists x \sim \Phi x$ (that is, the existence of a particular x to which the Φ function does not apply, of an x that denies universality).

an x that contradicts it. But that is true on one sole condition, which is that, in the whole or the not-whole in question, we are dealing with the finite. Regarding that which is finite, there is not simply an implication but a strict equivalence.³⁷ It is enough for there to be one that contradicts the universalizing formula for us to have to abolish that formula and transform it into a particular. The not-whole becomes the equivalent of that which, in Aristotelian logic, is enunciated on the basis of the particular. There is an exception. But we could, on the contrary, be dealing with the infinite. Then it is no longer from the perspective of extension that we must take up the not-whole (*pas-toute*). When I say that woman is not-whole and that that is why I cannot say Woman, it is precisely because I raise the question (*je mets en question*) of a jouissance that, with respect to everything that can be used³⁸ in the function Φx , is in the realm of the infinite.

Now, as soon as you are dealing with an infinite set, you cannot posit that the not-whole implies the existence of something that is produced on the basis of a negation or contradiction. You can, at a pinch, posit it as an indeterminate existence. But, as we know from the extension of mathematical logic, that mathematical logic which is qualified as intuitionist, to posit a “there exists,” one must also be able to construct it, that is, know how to find where that existence is.

I base myself on that when I produce this quartering (*écartèlement*)³⁹ that posits an existence that Recanati has very well qualified as eccentric to the truth. This indetermination is suspended between $\exists x$ and $\exists x$, between an existence that is found by affirming itself and woman insofar as she is not found,⁴⁰ which is confirmed by the case of Regine.

In closing, I will tell you something that will constitute, as is my wont, a bit of an enigma. If you reread somewhere something I wrote entitled “The Freudian Thing,” you should find therein the following, that there is only one way to be able to write Woman without having to bar it – that is at the level at which woman is truth. And that is why one can only half-speak of her.

The article on which Jean-Claude Milner's exposé was based can be found in his book, Arguments linguistiques, pages 179–217 (Paris: Seuil, 1973).

April 10, 1973

³⁷ In other words, $\sim \forall x \Phi x = \exists x \sim \Phi x$.

³⁸ If the French here, *se sert*, is changed to the identically pronounced *se serve*, the words “can be used” could read “is encompassed.”

³⁹ The French here means splitting up or quartering (as by horses), and refers no doubt to Lacan's four formulas of sexuation. The last few words of this sentence, *excentrique à la vérité*, could also be translated as “eccentric with respect to the truth.”

⁴⁰ *Elle ne se trouve pas* can also mean “she does not find herself.”

IX

On the Baroque

WHERE IT SPEAKS, IT ENJOYS, AND IT KNOWS NOTHING.

I think of you (*Je pense à vous*). That does not mean that I conceptualize you (*Je vous pense*).

Perhaps someone here remembers that I once spoke of a language in which one would say, "I love to you" (*j'aime à vous*),¹ that language modeling itself better than others on the indirect character of that attack called love.

"I think of you" (*Je pense à vous*) already constitutes a clear objection to everything that could be called "human sciences" in a certain conception of science – not the kind of science that has been done for only a few centuries, but the kind that was defined in a certain way with Aristotle. The consequence is that one must wonder, regarding the crux (*principe*) of what analytic discourse has contributed, by what pathways the new science that is ours can proceed.

That implies that I first formulate where we are starting from. We are starting from what analytic discourse provides us, namely, the unconscious. That is why I will first refine for you a few formulations that are a bit tough going concerning where the unconscious stands with respect to traditional science. That will lead me to raise the following question: how is a science still possible after what can be said about the unconscious?

I will announce to you already that, as surprising as it may seem, that will lead me to talk to you today about Christianity.

1

I will begin with my difficult formulations, or at least I assume they must be difficult: "The unconscious is not the fact that being thinks" – though that is implied by what is said thereof in traditional science – "the uncon-

¹ See Seminar XIX, February 9, 1972.

scious is the fact that being, by speaking, enjoys, and," I will add, "wants to know nothing more about it." I will add that that means "know nothing about it at all."

To immediately show you a card I could have made you wait a little while for – "there's no such thing as a desire to know," that famous *Wissenmief* Freud points to somewhere.²

Freud contradicts himself there. Everything indicates – that is the meaning of the unconscious – not only that man already knows all he needs to know, but that this knowledge is utterly and completely limited to that insufficient jouissance constituted by the fact that he speaks.

You see that that implies a question regarding the status of the actual science we clearly possess that goes by the name of a physics. In what sense does this new science concern the real? The problem with the kind of science I qualify as traditional, because it comes to us from Aristotle's thought, is that it implies that what is thought of (*le pensé*)³ is in the image of thought, in other words, that being thinks.

To take an example that is close to home for you, I will state that what makes what we call "human relations" bearable is not thinking about them.

It is on that point that what is comically called "behaviorism"⁴ is ultimately based – behavior, according to behaviorism can be observed in such a way that it is clarified by its end. People hoped to found human sciences thereupon, encompassing all behavior, there being no intention of any subject presupposed therein. On the basis of a finality posited as the object of that behavior, nothing is easier – that object having its own regulation – than to imagine it in the nervous system.

The hitch is that behaviorism does nothing more than inject therein everything that has been elaborated philosophically, "Aristotelically," concerning the soul. And thus nothing changes. That is borne out by the fact that behaviorism has not, to the best of my knowledge, distinguished itself by any radical change in ethics, in other words, in mental habits, in the *fundamental* habit. Man, being but an object, serves an end. He is founded on the basis of his final cause – regardless of what we may think, it's still there – which, in this case, is to live or, more precisely, to survive, in other words, to postpone death and dominate his rival.

It is clear that the number of thoughts implicit in such a world view, such a "Welanschauung" as they say, is utterly incalculable. What is at stake is the constant equation of thought and that which is thought of.⁵

² See, for example, SE VII, 194, where it is translated as "instinct for knowledge," and SE X, 245 where it is translated as "epistemophilic instinct."

³ *Le pensé* (unlike *la pensée*, thought) is "that which is conceptualized."

⁴ Whenever Lacan mentions behaviorism here, he uses the English term instead of the French *comportementalisme*.

⁵ That is, of thought and the "reality" thought "thinks" or conceptualizes.

What is clearest about traditional science's way of thinking is what is called its "classicism" – namely, the Aristotelian reign of the class, that is, of the genus and the species, in other words, of the individual considered as specified. It is also the aesthetic that results therefrom, and the ethics that is ordained thereby. I will qualify that ethics in a simple way, an overly simple way that risks making you see red, that's the word for it, but you would be wrong to see too quickly – "thought is on the winning side (*du côté du manche*), and that which is thought of is on the other side," which can be read in the fact that the winner is speech – only speech explains and justifies (*tend raison*).⁶

In that sense, behaviorism does not leave behind the classical. It is the said winner (*dit-manche*) – the Sunday (*dimanche*)⁷ of life, as Queneau says,⁸ not without at the same time revealing therein being as abased.

It's not obvious at first. But what I will point out is that that *Sunday* was read and approved of by someone who, in the history of thought, knew quite a bit, namely, Kojève, and who recognized in it nothing less than absolute knowledge such as it is promised to us by Hegel.

2

As someone recently noticed, I am situated (*je me range*) – who situates me? is it him or is it me? that's a subtlety of language⁹ – I am situated essentially on the side of the baroque.

That is a reference point borrowed from the history of art. Since the history of art, just like history and just like art, is something that is related not to the winning side but to the sleeve (*la manche*),¹⁰ in other words, to sleight of hand, I must, before going on, tell you what I mean by that – the subject, "I," being no more active in that "I mean" than in the "I am situated."

And that is what is going to make me delve into the history of Christianity. Weren't you expecting it?

⁶ *Du côté du manche* also means "thought has the whiphand (or the upper hand)." *Le manche* literally means "handle," and the expression seems to imply "holding the reins." *Rendre raison* is usually used in the expression *rendre raison de quelque chose à quelqu'un*, "to explain or justify something to someone."

⁷ With this neologism, *dit-manche*, Lacan is playing on the identical pronunciation of *dimanche*, "Sunday," and the combination of *dit* ("the said" or "spoken") and *manche*, "the winning side" (which also means "set" in tennis and "handle," as mentioned above).

⁸ *Le dimanche de la vie* (literally, "The Sunday of Life") is the title of one of Raymond Queneau's novels.

⁹ In French, *je me range*, could equally well mean "I situate myself" or "I am situated" (by someone else).

¹⁰ *La manche* is a rubber (or round), as in the card game of bridge, or a sleeve; *la Manche* is the English Channel.

The baroque is, at the outset, the "storyette"¹¹ or little tale of Christ. I mean what history recounts about a man. Don't blow a fuse trying to figure it out – he himself designated himself as the Son of Man. That is reported by four texts said to be "evangelical," not so much because they bore good news as because (their authors) were announcers who were good at propagating their sort of news. It can also be understood that way, and that strikes me as more appropriate. They write in such a way that there is not a single fact that cannot be challenged therein – God knows that people naturally ran straight at the mulera. These texts are nonetheless what go right to the heart of truth, the truth as such, up to and including the fact I enunciate, that one can only say it halfway.

That is a simple indication. Their shocking success would imply that I take up these texts and give you lessons on the Gospels. You see what that would lead to.

I would do that to show you that those texts can best be grasped in light of the categories I have tried to isolate in analytic practice, namely, the symbolic, imaginary, and real.

To restrict our attention to the first, I enunciated that truth is the "dimension," the "mension" of what is said (*la mension du dit*).¹²

In this vein, you can't say it any better than the Gospels. You can't speak any better of the truth. That is why they are the Gospels. You can't even bring the dimension of truth into play any better, in other words, push away reality in fantasy (*mieux repousser la réalité dans le fantasme*).¹³

After all, what followed demonstrated sufficiently – I am leaving behind the texts and will confine my attention to their effect – that this dit-mension stands up. It inundated what we call the world, bringing it back to its filthy truth (*vérité d'immondice*). It relayed what the Roman, a mason like no other, had founded on the basis of a miraculous, universal balance, including baths of jouissance sufficiently symbolized by those famous thermal baths of which only crumbled bits remain. We can no longer have the slightest idea to what extent, regarding jouissance, that took the cake. Christianity rejected all that to the abjection considered to be the world. It is thus not without an intimate affinity to the problem of the true that Christianity subsists.

That it is the true religion, as it claims, is not an excessive claim, all the more so in that, when the true is examined closely, it's the worst that can be said about it.

¹¹ The term Lacan uses here, *histoirette*, seems to be a neologism.

¹² *Mension* is a neologism, combining the homonymy *mansion* (from the Latin *mansio*, "dwelling," which in French was the term for each part of a theater set in the Middle Ages) and *mention* ("mention," "note," or "honors," as in *cum laude*). It is also the last part of the word "dimension."

¹³ Or "back reality into fantasy."

Once one enters into the register of the true, one can no longer exit it. In order to relegate the truth to the lowly status it deserves, one must have entered into analytic discourse. What analytic discourse dislodges¹⁴ puts truth in its place, but does not shake it up. It is reduced, but indispensable. Hence its consolidation, against which nothing can prevail – except what still subsists of the wisdom traditions, though they have not confronted it, Taoism, for example, and other doctrines of salvation in which what is at stake is not truth but the pathway, as the very name “Tao” indicates, and to manage to prolong something that resembles it.

It is true that the story of Christ is presented, not as the enterprise of saving men, but as that of saving God. We must recognize that he who took on this enterprise, namely Christ, paid the price – that's the least we can say about it.

We should be surprised that the result seems to satisfy people. The fact that God is indissolubly three is such as to make us prejudge that the count “1-2-3” pre-existed him. One of the two following statements must be true: either he takes into account only the retroactive effect (*l'après-coup*) of Christian revelation, and it is his being that suffers a blow – or the three is prior to him, and it is his unity that takes a hit. Whence it becomes conceivable that God's salvation is precarious and ultimately dependent upon the goodwill of Christians.

What is amusing is obviously – I already told you this, but you didn't catch it – that atheism is tenable only to clerics.¹⁵ It is far more difficult for lay people, whose innocence in that realm remains utter and complete. Recall poor Voltaire. He was a clever, agile, devious, and extraordinarily quick-witted guy, but was altogether worthy of being placed in the umbrella stand¹⁶ across the way known as the Pantheon.

Freud fortunately gave us a necessary interpretation – it doesn't stop (*ne cesse pas*) being written, as I define the necessary – of the murder of the son as founding the religion of grace.¹⁷ He didn't say it quite like that, but he clearly noted that this murder was a mode of negation (*dénégation*) that constitutes a possible form of the avowal of truth.

That is how Freud saves the Father once again. In that respect he imitates Jesus Christ. Modestly, no doubt, since he doesn't pull out all the stops.

¹⁴ This is, perhaps, a reference to Marie Bonaparte's reductionistic translation of Freud's *Wiß Es war, soll Ich werden. Le moi déloge le ça* (“The ego dislodges the id”).

¹⁵ The French here, *soutenable que par les clercs*, could also be translated as “bearable only to clerics.”

¹⁶ The French here, *vide-poches*, literally refers to a small piece of furniture into which one empties one's pockets. Seminar XX was held in the law school across the square from the Pantheon.

¹⁷ See SE XXI, 136.

But he contributes thereto, playing his little part as a good Jew who was not entirely up-to-date.

There are plenty like that.¹⁸ We must regroup them in order to get them moving. How long will it last?

There is something that I would nevertheless like to get at concerning the essence of Christianity. You're going to have to bust your asses to follow me here.

First I will have to back up a bit.

3

The soul – you have to read Aristotle – is obviously what the winning thought leads to.

It is all the more necessary – that is, it doesn't stop being written – since what the thought in question elaborates are thoughts about (*sur*) the body.

The body should impress you more. In fact, that is what impresses classical science – how can it work like that? A body, yours or any other one besides, a roving body, must suffice unto itself.¹⁹ Something made me think of it, a little syndrome that I saw emerge from my ignorance, and that I was reminded of – if it so happened that one's tears dried up, the eye wouldn't work very well anymore. I call such things miracles of the body. That can be grasped immediately. What if the lachrymal gland didn't cry or drip anymore? You would run into trouble.

On the other hand, the fact is that it snivels, and why the devil does it when, corporally, imaginarily or symbolically, someone steps on your foot? Someone affects you – that's what it's called. What relation is there between that sniveling and the fact of parrying the unexpected, in other words, getting the hell out of there (*se barrer*)? That's a vulgar formulation, but it says what it means, because it precisely reconverges with the barred subject (*sujet barré*), some consonance of which you hear therein. Indeed, the subject gets the hell out of there (*se barré*),²⁰ as I said, and more often than it is his turn to do so.

Observe here simply that there are many advantages to unifying the expression for the symbolic, imaginary, and real – I am saying this to you in parentheses – as Aristotle did, who did not distinguish movement from *αλλοιως*. Change and motion in space were for him – though he didn't

¹⁸ It is not at all clear to me what Lacan is referring to in this paragraph. *C'est excessivement répandu* could also be translated as “That's all too common.” The only plural noun “them” could refer to in the next sentence seems to be Freud and Voltaire (lay people) or the three that God is, mentioned four paragraphs back.

¹⁹ The French, *il faut que ça se suffise*, could also be translated as “it must be self-sufficient (or self-contained).”

²⁰ The French here literally means “bars himself.”

realize it – the fact that the subject gets the hell out of there. Obviously Aristotle didn't have the true categories, but, all the same, he sensed things very well.

In other words, what is important is that all that hang together well enough for the body to subsist, barring any accident, as they say, whether external or internal. Which means that the body is taken for what it presents itself to be, an enclosed body (*un corps fermé*).

Isn't it plain to see that the soul is nothing other than the supposed identicalness (*identité*) of this body to everything people think in order to explain it? In short, the soul is what one thinks regarding the body – on the winning side.

And people are reassured by thinking that the body thinks in the same way. Hence the diversity of explanations. When it is assumed to think secretly, there are secretions. When it is assumed to think concretely, there are concretions. When it is assumed to think information, there are hormones. And still further, it gives itself over (*s'adonne*) to DNA (*ADN*), to Adonis.

All of that to bring you to the following, which I announced at the beginning regarding the subject of the unconscious – because I don't speak just casually, to waste my breath²¹ – it is truly odd that the fact that the structure of thought is based on language is not thrown into question in psychology. The said language – that's the only thing that's new in the term "structure," others do whatever they feel like with it, but what I point out is that – the said language brings with it considerable inertia, which is seen by comparing its functioning to signs that are called mathematical – "mathemes" – solely because they are integrally transmitted. We haven't the slightest idea what they mean, but they are transmitted. Nevertheless, they are not transmitted without the help of language, and that's what makes the whole thing shaky.

If there is something that grounds being, it is assuredly the body. On that score, Aristotle was not mistaken. He sorted out many of them, one by one – see his history of animals. But he doesn't manage, if we read him carefully, to link it to his affirmation – naturally you have never read *De Anima* (*On the Soul*), despite my supplications – that man thinks *with* – instrument – his soul, that is, as I just told you, the presumed mechanisms on which the body is based.

Naturally, you have to watch out. We are the ones who introduce mechanisms because of our physics – which is already, moreover, on a dead end path because, ever since the rise of quantum physics, mechanisms don't

²¹ The French here, *comme on flûte* (literally, "the way people play the flute"), recalls the expression, *c'est comme si je flûtais*, meaning "as if I were talking to a brick wall, to no purpose, to myself," etc.

work. Aristotle didn't enter into the narrow straits of mechanisms. Thus, "man thinks with his soul" means that man thinks with Aristotle's thought. In that sense, thought is naturally on the winning side.

It is obvious that people have nevertheless tried to do better. There is still something else prior to quantum physics – "energetism" and the idea of homeostasis. What I called inertia in the function of language is such that all speech is an energy not yet taken up in an energetics, because that energetics is not easy to measure. Energetics means bringing out, in energy, not quantities, but numbers chosen in a completely arbitrary fashion, with which one arranges things in such a way that there is always a constant somewhere. We are forced to take up the inertia in question at the level of language itself.

What possible relationship can there be between the articulation that constitutes language and the jouissance that reveals itself to be the substance of thought, of that thought so easily reflected in the world by traditional science? That jouissance is the one that makes it such that God is the Supreme Being and that that Supreme Being can, as Aristotle said, be nothing other than the locus in which the good of all the others is known. That doesn't have much to do with thought – does it? – if we consider it to be dominated above all by the inertia of language.

It's not very surprising that no one knew how to grasp or catch jouissance, how to make it squeal, by using what seems to best prop up the inertia of language, namely, the idea of a chain, in other words, bits of string – bits of string that constitute rings and hook onto each other, though we're not too sure how.

I already presented this notion to you once before, and I will try to do better. Last year – I myself am surprised, as I get older, that last year's things seem a hundred years away to me – I took as my theme a formulation that I felt I could base on the Borromean knot: "I ask you to refuse what I offer you because that's not it" (*parce que ce n'est pas ça*).²²

That formulation is carefully designed to have an effect, like all those I proffer. See "*L'Étourdi*." I didn't say "the saying remains forgotten" and so on – I said "the fact that one says." Similarly here, I did not say "because that's all it is" (*parce que ce n'est que ça*).

"That's not it" is the very cry by which the jouissance obtained is distinguished from the jouissance expected. It is here that what can be said in language is specified. Negation certainly seems to derive therefrom. But nothing more.

Structure, which connects up here, demonstrates nothing if not that it is of the same text as jouissance, insofar as, in marking by what distance jouis-

²² See Seminar XIX, . . . *ou pire*, class given on February 9, 1972.

sance misses – the jouissance that would be in question if “that were it” – structure does not presuppose merely the jouissance that would be it, it also props up another.

Voilà. This dit-mension – I am repeating myself, but we are in a domain where law is repetition – this dit-mension is Freud’s saying (*dire*).

Indeed, that is the proof of Freud’s existence – in a certain number of years we will need one. Earlier I associated him with a little friend, Christ. The proof of Christ’s existence is obvious: it’s Christianity. Christianity, in fact, is attached to it. Anyway, for the time being, we have the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* that I asked you to look at, because I will have to use it again concerning what I call *la dérive* to translate *Trieb*, the drift of jouissance.²³

All of that, I insist, is precisely what was covered over (*collabé*) during the whole of philosophical antiquity by the idea of knowledge.

Thank God, Aristotle was intelligent enough to isolate in the intellect-agent what is at stake in the symbolic function. He simply saw that the symbolic is where the intellect must act (*agir*). But he wasn’t intelligent enough – because he hadn’t benefited from (*joui de*) Christian revelation – to think that speech (*une parole*),²⁴ even his own, by designating the *words* that is based only on language, concerns jouissance, the latter nevertheless being designated metaphorically throughout his work.

The whole business of matter and form – what a lot of old claptrap it suggests concerning copulation! It²⁵ would have allowed him to see that that’s not it at all, that there isn’t the slightest knowledge (*connaissance*), but that the jouissances that prop up the semblance thereof are something like the spectrum of white light – on the sole condition that one see that the jouissance at stake is outside the field of that spectrum.

It’s a question of metaphor. Regarding the status of jouissance, we must situate the false finality as corresponding to the pure fallacy of a jouissance that would supposedly correspond to the sexual relationship.²⁶ In this respect, all of the jouissances are but rivals of the finality that would be constituted if jouissance had the slightest relationship with the sexual relationship.

²³ *Dérive* literally means “drift,” but is very close in spelling to the English term for *Trieb*, “drive.”

²⁴ Or “a word.”

²⁵ “It” here seems to refer back to “Christian revelation” or to the notion that speech concerns jouissance.

²⁶ The French here, *adéquate au rapport sexuel*, implies a number of things that English cannot adequately render in a word: a jouissance that is supposedly “adequate to the sexual relationship,” “sufficient for a sexual relationship (to be constituted),” and “appropriate.” It would answer to it or correspond to it.

4

I’m going to add a little more frosting on the Christ, because he is an important personage, and because it fits into my commentary on the baroque. It’s not without reason that people say that my discourse has something baroque about it.

I am going to raise a question – of what importance can it be in Christian doctrine that Christ have a soul? That doctrine speaks only of the incarnation of God in a body, and assumes that the passion suffered in that person constituted another person’s jouissance. But there is nothing lacking here, especially not a soul.

Christ, even when resurrected from the dead, is valued for his body, and his body is the means by which communion in his presence is incorporated – oral drive – with which Christ’s wife, the Church as it is called, contents itself very well, having nothing to expect from copulation.

In everything that followed from the effects of Christianity, particularly in art – and it’s in this respect that I coincide with the “baroquism” with which I accept to be clothed – everything is exhibition of the body evoking jouissance – and you can lend credence to the testimony of someone who has just come back from an orgy of churches in Italy – but without copulation. If copulation isn’t present, it’s no accident. It’s just as much out of place there as it is in human reality, to which it nevertheless provides sustenance with the fantasies by which that reality is constituted.

Nowhere, in any cultural milieu, has this exclusion been admitted to more nakedly. I will even go a bit further – don’t think I don’t mete out what I say (*mes dires*) to you – I will go so far as to tell you that nowhere more blatantly than in Christianity does the work of art as such show itself as what it has always been in all places – obscenity.

The dit-mension of obscenity is that by which Christianity revives the religion of men. I’m not going to give you a definition of religion, because there is no more a history of religion than a history of art. “Religions,” like “the arts,” is nothing but a basket category, for there isn’t the slightest homogeneity therein.

But there is something in the utensils people keep fabricating to one-up each other. What is at stake, for those beings whose nature it is to speak, is the urgency constituted by the fact that they engage in amorous diversions (*déduts*)²⁷ in ways that are excluded from what I could call “the soul of copulation,” were it conceivable, in the sense that I gave earlier to the word “soul,” namely, what is such that it functions. I dare to prop up with this word that which – effectively pushing them to it if it were the soul of copula-

²⁷ *Déduts amoureux* could also be translated as “amorous pursuits.”

tion – could be elaborated by what I call a physics, which in this case is nothing other than the following: a thought that can be presupposed in thinking.²⁸

There is a hole there and that hole is called the Other. At least that is what I felt I could name (*dénommer*) it, the Other qua locus in which speech, being deposited (*déposée*)²⁹ – pay attention to the resonances here – founds truth and, with it, the pact that makes up for the non-existence of the sexual relationship, insofar as it would be conceptualized (*pensé*), in other words, something that could conceivably be conceptualized (*pensé pensable*),³⁰ and that discourse would not be reduced to beginning solely from semblance – if you remember the title of one of my seminars.³¹

The fact that thought moves in the direction of a science³² only by being attributed to thinking³³ – in other words, the fact that being is presumed to think – is what founds the philosophical tradition starting from Parmenides. Parmenides was wrong and Heraclitus was right. That is clinched by the fact that, in fragment 93, Heraclitus enunciates *ὄντε λέγει οὄντε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ στήνεται*, “he neither avows nor hides, he signifies” – putting back in its place the discourse of the winning side itself – *ὁ ἀνὰ ὅν τὸ μαρτυρεῖν ἔστι τὸ ἐν ἀελοῖς*, “the prince” – in other words, the winner – “who prophesizes in Delphi.”³⁴

You know the crazy story, the one that arouses my delirious admiration? I roll on the floor laughing when I read Saint Thomas (Aquinas), because it's awfully well put together. For Aristotle's philosophy to have been reinjected by Saint Thomas into what one might call the Christian conscience, if that had any meaning, is something that can only be explained by the fact that Christians – well, it's the same with psychoanalysts – abhor what was revealed to them. And they are right.

The gap inscribed in the very status of jouissance qua dit-mension of the

²⁸ The French here, *une pensée supposable au penser*, could also be translated as “a thought attributable to thinking.”

²⁹ *Déposée* also means registered (as in a *marque déposée*, “a registered trademark”) and deposited (as when a monarch is stripped of power).

³⁰ The awkwardness of this formulation is based on the fact that Lacan shifts from a verb form, *pensé* (thought of, conceived of, or conceptualized) in *il servait pensé*, to a noun form, *pensé* (what is thought of or conceptualized) in *il servait pensée*, which could perhaps also be rendered as “thinkable matter for thought.”

³¹ Seminar XVIII was entitled, *D'un discours qui ne servait pas du semblant* (“On a Discourse That Would Not Be Based on Semblance”).

³² *Que la pensée n'agisse dans le sens d'une science* could also be translated as “The fact that thought acts in the sense of a science” or “sits only in the direction of a science.”

³³ Or “presupposed in thinking.”

³⁴ This fragment is number 247 in *The Presocratic Philosophers* by Kirk and Raven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957); the authors give *ἐστι* where the original French text of the Seminar has *ἐστὶ*; the English translation they provide is: “The Lord whose oracle is in Delphi neither speaks out nor conceals, but gives a sign” (211).

body, in the speaking being, is what re-emerges with Freud – and I'm not saying anything more than him – through the test constituted by the existence of speech. Where it speaks, it enjoys (*La où ça parle, ça jouit*). And that doesn't mean that it knows anything because, as far as I've heard, the unconscious has revealed nothing to us about the physiology of the nervous system, the process of getting a hard-on, or early ejaculation.

To once and for all put an end to this business about the true religion, I will, while there is still time, point out that God is manifested only in writings that are said to be sacred. Sacred in what respect? In that they don't stop repeating the failure – read Salomon, the master of masters, the master of feeling (*sentimaine*),³⁵ someone of my own ilk – the failure of the attempts made by a wisdom tradition to which being is supposed to testify.

None of that implies that there weren't things from time to time thanks to which jouissance – without it, there could be no wisdom – could believe that it had reached the goal of satisfying the thought of being (*la pensée de l'être*). But that goal has never been satisfied, except at the price of a castration.

In Taoism, for example – you don't know what it is, very few do, but I have worked at it, by reading the texts, of course – this is clear in the very practice of sex. In order to feel good, one must withhold one's cum. Buddhism is the trivial example by its renunciation of thought itself. What is best in Buddhism is Zen, and Zen consists in answering you by barking, my little friend. That is what is best when one wants, naturally, to get out of this infernal business, as Freud called it.

The fantasizing (*fabulation*) of antiquity, mythology as you call it – Claude Lévi-Strauss also called it by that name – of the Mediterranean region – which is precisely the one we don't touch because it's the most profuse and, above all, because such a big to-do has been made of it that one no longer knows by what strand to approach it – mythology has also come to something in the form of psychoanalysis.

There were shovelfuls of gods – all one had to do was find the right one. Which led to this contingent thing that is such that sometimes, after an analysis, we manage to achieve a state in which a guy correctly fucks his “one gal” (*un chacun baise convenablement sa une chachune*).³⁶ They were gods

³⁵ *Senti-maine* is a neologism that combines “master” (*maître*) and “sentimental” or “feeling” (*senti* is “to feel”), and is also a homonym for *centimètre* (“centimeter”).

³⁶ Lacan is modifying a well-known French expression, *à chacun sa chachune*, loosely translated, “A gal for every guy” or “Every guy has his gal.” He inserts *un* before *chacun* and *une* after *sa* (rendering it grammatically incorrect) and before *chachune*. The *une chachune* is perhaps Lacan's way of insisting that women cannot be taken as a whole or set (that is, as Woman), but only one by one. A similar expression is found in Seminar XIX (May 4, 1972).

all the same, that is, rather consistent representations of the Other. Let us pass over here the weakness of the analytic operation.

Oddly enough, that is so completely compatible with Christian belief that we saw a renaissance of polytheism during the era known by the same name.

I am telling you all that precisely because I just got back from the museums, and because the Counter-Reformation was ultimately a return to the sources and the baroque the parading thereof.

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The baroque is the regulating of the soul by corporal radiocopy.

I should sometime – I don't know if I'll ever have the time – speak of music, in the margins. For the time being, I am only speaking of what we see in all the churches in Europe, everything attached to the walls, everything that is crumbling, everything that delights, everything that is delirious.³⁷ It's what I earlier called obscenity – but exalted.

I wonder what effect this flood of representations of martyrs must have on someone who comes from backwoods China. That formulation can be reversed – those representations are themselves martyrs. You know that "martyr" means witness – of a more or less pure suffering. That was what our painting was about, until the slate was wiped clean when people began to seriously concern themselves with little squares.

There is a reduction of the human species here – that word, "human" (*humaine*), resounds like "unhealthy humor" (*humour malsaine*), and there is a remainder that creates "misfortune" (*malheur*). That reduction is the term by which the Church intends to carry the species – that's the word for it – right up to the end of time. And it is so well grounded in the gap peculiar to the sexuality of speaking beings that it risks being at least as well grounded, let's say – because I don't want to give up on anything – as the future of science.

The Future of Science is the title of a book by that other priesting named Ernest Renan, who was also an all-out servant of the truth.³⁸ He only required one thing of truth – but it was absolutely capital, failing which, he panicked – that it have no consequence whatsoever.

The economy of jouissance is something we can't yet put our fingertips on. It would be of some interest if we managed to do so (*qu'on y arrive*). What we can see on the basis of analytic discourse is that we may have a slight chance of finding out something about it, from time to time, by pathways that are essentially contingent.

³⁷ *Délier* literally means "to have delusions," "to be delirious," or "to imagine things." Figuratively it means "to go nuts," "to proliferate like mad," and so on.

³⁸ Renan's book was written in 1848–1849 and finally published in French in 1890 by Calmann-Lévy. It was translated into English by Albert Vandam and C. B. Pimman (London: Chapman, 1891).

If my discourse today hadn't been absolutely and entirely negative, I would tremble at having lapsed into philosophical discourse. Nevertheless, since we have already seen several wisdom traditions that have lasted quite a while, why shouldn't we find, with analytic discourse, something that gives us a glimpse of something precise? After all, what is energetics if it is not also a mathematical thing (*trac*)?³⁹ The analytic thing will not be mathematical. That is why the discourse of analysis differs from scientific discourse.

Well, let us leave that chance to lady luck – *encore*.⁴⁰

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³⁹ *Trac* can also mean "gizmo," "thingamabob," etc.

⁴⁰ Lacan transforms the usual expression here, *au petit bonheur la chance*, used when you try to get or do something haphazardly – you leave it to lady luck. He says, *Enfin, cette chance, mettons-la sous le signe d'un petit bonheur – encore*.